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Where's That Intelligence In the CIA?

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The leading journalist defender of the CIA burglars at Watergate last week took the next logical step and became, second only to the President of the United States, the leading defender of CIA murderers in Chile and elsewhere.

What is the CIA to do?, he asked plaintively and rhetorically, expecting no answer because in a naughty world someone must be naughty or the rest of us cannot be nice.

That question about what is the CIA to do, however, is far from rhetorical. It is one of the burning questions the country faces in the wake of Watergate and the Cold War. We have got to recognize the connection between those two things

and we have got to decide, through our elected representatives, just what it is the CIA is to do. The CIA has amply demonstrated that it can no longer be allowed to answer that question for itself.

ONE ANSWER TO the question is that the CIA might try doing what it was set up to do, which was not to go around assassinating people, overthrowing governments and burglarizing the headquarters of the Democratic party—which was not even to gather "intelligence," but was actually to coordinate intelligence gathered by the various other already-existing intelligence organizations of the government, chiefly the FBI and those of the military services.

As the "central" agency in the field, the CIA was to bring together the strands of fact or fancy dug up by the others, make sure that logical connections were not missed because their components existed in isolation from one another, and make sure that everyone in the "intelligence community" knew everything necessary to draw the most nearly true conclusions.

That's a far cry from rubbing out Allende or breaking and entering Larry O'Brien's office.

IF IT IS objected that there is no reason to assume the CIA had anything to

do with Watergate, the obvious answer is that there is much less reason to assume the agency did not. Since President Ford has joined the Watergate cover-up crew, not so much by pardoning the master criminal as by giving him power to destroy the rest of the evidence, we may never know for certain one way or the other. But surely, starting with the overlap of personnel between the CIA's Bay of Pigs and Watergate, and going on to the supply by the agency of special equipment to Howard Hunt, there is enough evidence to suggest that only the very naive or the self-serving can pretend there is no connection at all.

The most penetrating observation about the destruction of Allende was made by an American church group, which said, "Chile is Watergate with a passport."

By the same token, Watergate was Chile with an American visa.

Under the pretext of contacting foreign sources now here resident, the CIA has been active in the United States for years, enjoying all powers except the power to arrest.

THERE IS, THEN, a double question about what is the CIA to do. The more horrifying question is this: Is the agency finally to be turned loose against Americans on a large scale, a freeing of the hounds that Watergate powerfully suggests has already been accomplished at least on a small scale? The agency's charter specifically forbids it to operate in this country.

If congressional investigation shows that it has in fact done so, some one should go to jail, starting with the CIA director who authorized such action and the civil official, however admired by the diplomatic press, who authorized him.

The second question probably is more urgent: Is this country to operate as a bandit in the community of nations? Are we, through the CIA, to overthrow legally elected governments freely for the convenience of heavy conglomerate contributors to the party in power? Or for the pursuit of private fancies of cold-war valor?

A sub-question is this: With the Italian government apparently about to bring in the Italian Communists in an effort to stabilize the country, are we prepared to "destabilize" it by "direct action"? If Kissinger has CIA assassins in Rome waiting to rub out the first

Communist members of the Italian cabinet, they should be recalled at once and put on the leash at Langley until all of us, through our representatives, can decide if this is the way we wish to be now.

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